

**FESTUCA ROEMERI – CAMASSIA QUAMASH –  
CERASTIUM ARVENSE**

Roemer's fescue – common camas – field chickweed

Abbreviated Name: FERO-CAQU-CEAR

Synonym: *Festuca idahoensis* var. *roemerii* –  
*Camassia quamash* – *Cerastium arvense*

Sample size = 3 plots

**DISTRIBUTION:** This association occurs as tiny remnants of formerly larger prairies on Whidbey Island, Island Co., San Juan Island, San Juan Co., and the Quimper Peninsula, Jefferson Co.

**GLOBAL/STATE STATUS:** GNRSH. Known from only three tiny non-functional remnants of formerly large prairies. It was probably much more extensive historically. All three sites are protected and can be used as seed sources for restoration of largely extirpated prairies.

**ID TIPS:** Dominated or co-dominated by Roemer's fescue. Gentle slopes or flats with relatively deep glacial-origin soils in the northern Puget Trough. Field chickweed and common camas always present; showy fleabane, Howell's brodiaea, or dune goldenrod usually present. Great camas absent.

**ENVIRONMENT:** These sites appear to be moderately dry. Occurs on gentle slopes or flats, part of rolling or planar glacial landforms. Soils may be deep sandy loam outwash or somewhat shallow gravelly loam glacial till. Occurs only in the Olympic Mountains rainshadow.

**Precipitation:** 21-25 inches

**Elevation:** 80-210 feet

**Aspect/slope:** variable/ 0-7%

**Slope position:** plain, upper

**Soil series:** San Juan, Townsend

**DISTURBANCE/SUCCESSION:** Historically maintained as open prairie by indigenous burning practices. Douglas-fir is able to establish on these sites in the absence of fire. The shrubs common snowberry and Nootka rose are frequent and tend to increase over time in the absence of fire. These sites are likely to convert to shrublands, coniferous woodlands or forest without fire.

**VEGETATION:** This is a grassland dominated or co-dominated by the bunchgrass Roemer's fescue. Long-stolon sedge or foothill

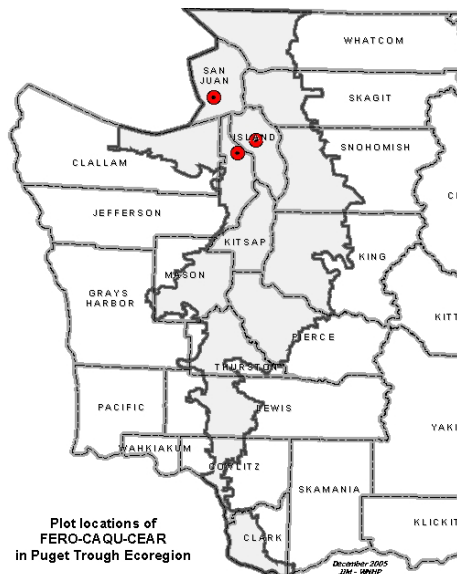
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**Vegetation Composition Table (selected species):**

Con = constancy, the percent of plots within which each species was found;  
Cov = cover, the mean crown cover of the species in plots where it was found;  
+ = trace (< 0.5% cover).

Shrubs and Dwarf-shrubs	Kartesz 2005 Name	Con	Cov
common snowberry	Symphoricarpos albus var. laevigatus	100	3
tall Oregongrape	Mahonia aquifolium	67	2
nootka rose	Rosa nutkana	67	+
<b>Graminoids</b>			
Roemer's fescue	Festuca roemerii	100	70
Kentucky bluegrass	Poa pratensis	100	23
long-stolon sedge	Carex inops ssp. inops	67	17
California danthonia	Danthonia californica	67	8
wood-rush	Luzula (comosa, multiflora ssp. multiflora)	67	8
common velvet grass	Holcus lanatus	67	4
Canadian bluegrass	Poa compressa	67	3
silver hairgrass	Aira caryophyllaea	67	2
prairie junegrass	Koeleria macrantha	67	2
foothill sedge	Carex tumulicola	33	8
<b>Forbs and Ferns</b>			
common camas	Camassia quamash	100	10
sheep sorrel	Rumex acetosella	100	6
western buttercup	Ranunculus occidentalis var. occidentalis	100	4
field chickweed	Cerastium arvense ssp. strictum	100	3
bracken fern	Pteridium aquilinum var. pubescens	100	3
common dandelion	Taraxacum officinale	100	+
English plantain	Plantago lanceolata	67	8
woolly sunflower	Eriophyllum lanatum var. lanatum	67	6
hairy cat's-ear	Hypochaeris radicata	67	6
spring-gold	Lomatium utriculatum	67	6
dune goldenrod	Solidago simplex ssp. simplex var. simplex	67	4
meadow death camas	Zigadenus venenosus var. venenosus	67	4
yarrow	Achillea millefolium var. occidentalis	67	3
showy fleabane	Erigeron speciosus var. speciosus	67	3
common vetch	Vicia sativa	67	3
chocolate lily	Fritillaria affinis var. affinis	67	2
cleavers	Galium aparine	67	2
suckling clover	Trifolium dubium	33	20
Menzies' fiddleneck	Amsinckia menziesii	33	8
old man's whiskers	Geum triflorum	33	8
common shepherd's-cress	Teesdalia nudicaulis	33	8
Howell's brodiaea	Triteleia grandiflora var. howellii	33	8

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sedge are typically prominent. The forb common camas is always present and sometimes very prominent. Western buttercup, bracken fern, and field chickweed are also consistently present. The shrubs common snowberry, tall Oregon grape, and Nootka rose are often present. Non-native Kentucky bluegrass is consistently prominent to co-dominant. Many other native and non-native species are sometimes present.

**CLASSIFICATION NOTES:** This association has not been previously described in the literature. It is intermediate in composition between FERO-CEAR-KOMA (dry grassy balds) and FERO-SERI (South Puget prairies on deep soil).

**MANAGEMENT NOTES:** Monitoring and control of Douglas-fir, Nootka rose, and common snowberry encroachment is recommended in order to prevent loss of the association through successional processes. Scot's broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), a nitrogen fixing non-native shrub, is a potential severe threat that should be monitored and controlled. Native species composition is also threatened by increase and expansion of non-native grasses.

**BIODIVERSITY NOTES:** This association is functionally extinct as an intact ecosystem. However, it retains value as a seed source and template for restoration of northern Puget Trough dry prairies.

Chappell, C.B. 2006. Upland plant associations of the Puget Trough ecoregion, Washington. Washington Department of Natural Resources, Natural Heritage Program, Olympia, WA. [<http://www.dnr.wa.gov/nhp/refdesk/communities/pdf/intro.pdf>].